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UNCLAS HARARE 001850

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT LAND REFORM IN ZIM; HARARE

- ¶1. Under headline "Farming: a great leap forward into uncertainty" the independent daily "The Daily News" dedicated its August 10 editorial to criticize the haphazard land reform program in Zimbabwe. Excerpts:
- ¶2. "The land reform program reached its peak this week with the expected departure, under Section 8, from their farms of all commercial farmers from properties designated by the government. The legal challenges in the courts are of significance because they indicate the farmers are not taking the seizure of their properties lying down. Even if they don't succeed, their message to the government is clear: the exercise could have been conducted with more decorum than it was. . .The legal challenges to the program suggest strongly that its fast-track element may have included a deliberate ploy to short-circuit the law relating to its implementation. The suspicion of something not quite moral about it will linger for a long time to come. The persecution of a whole race of citizens has left many Zimbabweans wondering about the sincerity with which the doctrine of reconciliation was pronounced on the eve of independence in 1980. People have been told that when the hand of friendship was stretched out to the commercial farmers, they spurned it, hence the apparent decision to abandon the softly-softly approach. Instead, a roughrider strategy was employed, which has culminated in. . .images of farmers leaving the homes they have known for generations with little but their memories. . . ."

SULLIVAN